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Conference Abstract

Documenting Natural History Collections in GBIF

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Abstract

The Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF) was established by governments in 2001, largely through the initiative and leadership of the natural history collections community, following the 1999 recommendation by a working group under the Megascience Forum (predecessor of the Global Science Forum) of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Over 20 years, GBIF has helped develop standards and convened a global community of data-publishing institutions, aggregating over one billion species occurrence records freely and openly available for use in research and policy making. Of these more than 150 million records originate from specimens preserved by the collections community. The recent adoption of the Global Registry of Scientific Collections by GBIF (https://www.gbif.org/news/5kyAslpqTVxYqZTwYn1cub) is the first step by GBIF to better enable a picture of the natural history collections of the world along with the associated science that they have and continue to enable.

Recognising that other collection metadata initiatives exists, GBIF aims to discuss with the community and progress topics such as:

1. Synchronising with existing metadata catalogues to ensure accurate, up-to-date information is available without unnecessary burden for authors

2. Defining, testing and formalizing the Collection Descriptions standard (https://github.com/tdwg/cd)

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3. Providing clear guidelines of citation practice for collections, potentially building on the success of the Digital Object Identifier (DOI) approach used for datasets mediated through GBIF.org.

4. Tracking citations of use through both data downloads and through references in literature, such as materials examined in a taxonomic publication

5. Improving the linkages and discoverability of specimen records derived from the same collecting event but preserved in multiple institutions

6. Improving the linkages between the people involved in collecting, preserving, and identifying specimen records through the use of Open Researcher and Contributor IDs (ORCID)

7. Lowering the technical threshold to deploy tools such as “data dashboards” and specimen search/download on collection related websites

The progress made to date will be summarised and a roadmap for the future will be introduced.

Keywords

GBIF, collections, metadata, standards, citation

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